



# GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

FEBRUARY 2019 VOLUME 10 ISSUE 2

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**Vendor Week 2019**  
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## Selling Groundcover News is work that transforms lives and working norms



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Selling Groundcover News is legitimate work – that is what our vendors want the world to know. They want it so badly that they asked us to concentrate all the effort we put into celebrating International Vendor Appreciation Week into getting that message out.

Here's how vendor Lit Kurtz expresses it:

*Groundcover vendors are independent contractors – micro-borrowers – sponsored by a legitimate business with its own rules and regulations. If you don't follow the rules, you don't get to sell Groundcover. We go through an orientation process to familiarize us with local ordinances and Groundcover's additional guidelines, such as staying one-and-a-half blocks away from other vendors,*

*being sober and polite. We wear badges that identify us, and we have permits to sell.*

*We have a support system with a sales manager and workshops to hone our skills. We also have a valuable product that gives a voice to people experiencing homelessness and provides insight for the community on this and other issues. It also provides an entry point for conversation and relationship between us and our customers. It provides a steady income with time and effort, and we change lives for the better.*

For vendor Zhandra S., it is the second job that develops her skills, enhances her self-image and will allow her to escape from minimum-wage jobs and develop a career:

*Today if selling Groundcover News wasn't a possibility, I'd do my other job at the restaurant (and NOT the panhandling on corners where is legal) because I can't help but feel that it's my responsibility, now that I have recovered from addiction, to be a productive member of society, and to give back in whatever ways I'm qualified or competent to give back.*

I had the privilege of interviewing a few of our vendors to get background

for an article running in the February issue of the Ann Arbor Observer. They reminded me why this project of ours is so important. It has taken on a life of its own and transcended our initial goals. Customers rely on our vendors for conversation and connection, as well as the paper. Not only is it saving and changing lives, it is changing the way people do business. There are at least three businesses started by Groundcover vendors that hold dual purposes: serving people's most basic needs and making money.

By serving people's most basic needs, I mean connecting with others and contributing to them. Nearly all of you are familiar with Boober Tours, the pedicab business started by Groundcover vendor Kevin Spangler. He drew his business model – giving away free rides, talking with customers and working for tips, advertising for businesses, employing others with fragile life circumstances – from what he learned at Groundcover.

Hailu, who many of you see around the Farmer's Market and People's Food Co-op, has started a transportation business, as well as one hosting Airbnb units. He, too, brought his service-oriented mindset to his new businesses.

He connects with his customers and becomes friends with them. He experiences success when he makes a difference in their lives, even if it costs him money. He shared this story:

*Recently, I responded to a pick-up request at Metro Airport. Instead of being in the terminal, the woman was in the parking lot with her car that wouldn't start. She needed to get to west Detroit. At first, I was annoyed, thinking I was losing so much time, wouldn't get back until 4 a.m. and would make no money on this run. Then I remembered that she was a person, maybe she had children she had to get to and that I had the opportunity to help her in a time of need.*

This inspires me. You know that old story about the person on the beach throwing stranded starfish back into the ocean? Someone says, "You know you can't make a difference. There are too many of them." And the good Samaritan replies, "It makes a difference to this one and this one and this one," as each flops back into the water. I am seeing our starfish become Samaritans.

I've realized that not only is selling Groundcover News legitimate work where people develop translatable skills and opportunities, it is building and transforming our community.

## A valentine of wonder and discovery



by Rev Dr.  
Martha Brunell  
Groundcover  
Contributor

When I was in elementary school in the late 1950s and early 1960s, one of the delights of midwinter was Valentine's Day. Around the first of the month, we made a large valentine mailbox. It was a good-sized box decorated in red, pink, and white with plenty of hearts. For several weeks before the holiday, students brought dime store valentines or maybe homemade ones addressed to their classmates. Every day more and more valentines were stuffed into the box.

By February 14, the valentine box resembled the mailbox at a busy post office just before pickup. It was difficult to jam even one more piece of mail into the slot. At our class party, the box was broken open, and different students served as letter carriers to distribute valentines to everyone. There was a pile of mail for each one.

Consider this column my 2019 valentine to all of you. I want you to imagine that I have made a large red heart, a medium-sized pink heart, and a smaller white heart out of construction paper. Red, pink and white paper have been folded in half before I cut out the hearts, so there is a distinct fold in the middle of the three hearts. When I glue

them together with red on the bottom, pink in the middle and white on top, I only apply the glue to the middle fold line and carefully align the fold lines on top of one another. That way when the glue dries, one can fold each heart upward in half and see what is written on the heart beneath it.

On the small white heart I have written a short message from Buddhist priest and peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh. He invites us all to publish, proclaim and protect good news, the special editions we glimpse and hear about in our lives and communities every day. It is a counterpoint to the big news in print and on the air shouting about what is wrong.

Next, carefully fold up the white heart. Underneath on the pink heart is author Diane Ackerman's commitment to be "a messenger of wonder."

When you are ready, fold up the pink heart around the white, to find the red heart's wondrous good news story I am spreading this season.

As a college student decades ago, before I sensed a nudge to go to seminary, I was a serious history major. I still move through the world with a love for historical details and questions. So my valentine story is a wondrous one that is long on history. It recently made a big splash in the official news, but it needs to be told and retold.

In an obscure location in Germany some researchers were working in the

cemetery of what had been a small women's religious community in the Middle Ages. Beyond the graves and a few foundation stones, there was almost no trace that this group of women ever existed.

While examining tartar on teeth found in the burial ground, they discovered an unknown woman's upper teeth flecked with blue. Upon further analysis they determined the tiny blue fragments were lapis lazuli, a rare blue stone that would have been carried on medieval trade routes from Afghanistan to this remote site in Germany. Lapis lazuli was ground then into powder to form one of the most expensive pigments used in the great illustrated manuscripts of the era. In all likelihood, contemporary scientific researchers had stumbled upon the teeth of a woman who was one of these most talented artists in medieval Europe. Very few were allowed to paint with gold, silver or lapis lazuli. Over time, lapis lazuli embedded in her tartar as she licked her brush to give it a sharp point and edge for painting.

Some scholars have long suspected women played a significant role in the rich artistry of

illuminated medieval manuscripts, but they lacked the proof for this hunch. And so the dominant image of male medieval monks as scribes has almost universally persisted until now.

For me there is always profound good news when we learn something new. It is a day of wonder and joy when we find the thread of a forgotten story, correct misconceptions, and include a broader range of people in our telling of who we are and where we have come from.

Good news and words of wonder foster connections, enlarge understanding, and break open the boundaries of the possible. Together with Thich Nhat Hahn and Diane Ackerman, I send you this imaginary valentine. Make February 14 a day to be a messenger of wonder passing on widely your editions of good news.

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Susan Beckett, Publisher  
contact@groundcovernews.com

Andrew Nixon, Editor

### Contributors Office Volunteers

Elizabeth Bauman  
Martha Brunell  
Selena Grover  
Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Will Shakespeare  
Kevin Spangler  
Payton Watt

Peter Beyer  
Kolin Biggs  
Ben Eldridge  
Katie Eldridge  
Glenn Gates  
Jon MacDonagh-Dumler  
Lucy Miller  
Sandy Schmoker  
Jan Taylor  
Payton Watt  
Mary Wisgerhof

Story or Photo Submissions:  
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Advertising:  
contact@groundcovernews.com

www.groundcovernews.org  
facebook.com/groundcover  
423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor  
734-263-2098

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

### Kudos on Equity article

The article Will Shakespeare wrote on the Washtenaw County Equity Initiative is excellent. It's very interesting, exceptionally well-written and thoroughly researched. Great work!

Peggy Lynch

### Unhealthy recipes

I really have to object to the recipe [fettuccine Alfredo] in the January 2019 issue of Groundcover. It does not reflect the prevailing wisdom and government advisories regarding healthy eating at all! And it represents a poor investment of food dollars for a low-income person.

Due especially to my family history of heart disease and strokes, I am careful to avoid refined (white, non-whole) grains, sugars, saturated fats and cholesterol, and to seek a diet abundant

in fruits, diverse vegetables, legumes, whole grains, seeds and nuts.

Also, I am deeply concerned about the effects that an animal-based diet has upon worldwide emissions of greenhouse gases, not to mention cruelty to animals and inequity in the distribution of foodstuffs, especially protein, amongst the world's people.

Obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other diet-related diseases together constitute our nation's number-one cause of preventable death.

The recipe reflects none of that! It calls for one pound of (most likely refined, "white") pasta, then one whole stick of butter (not olive oil?), 1 cup of heavy cream (!), and finally, more than a cup of cheese. How much saturated fat and cholesterol is that?! And no vegetables in fettuccini Alfredo – really?!!

In the same issue, you had an article about, among other things, the health disparities between low-income people and wealthier people in Washtenaw County. However, the recipe you of-

fered is neither low-cost nor healthy! I would call your recipe a heart attack waiting to happen.

For further information, and better recipes, I would recommend the books "The Prevention and Cure of Heart Disease" by Caldwell B. Es-selstyn Jr., "Forks over Knives – The Cookbook" by Del Sroufe and Isa Chandra Moskowitz, and "Becoming Vegan" by Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina. Also, Frances Moore Lappe's classic, "Diet for a Small Planet," first opened my eyes to the connection between animal-based diet, disease and world food injustice like – what – 45 years ago?!

I have seen many examples of simple, nutritious and healthful, affordable and "low-impact" dishes in Groundcover previously, and greatly appreciate that. I'm sure most people, like me, only get around to messaging someone when they're critical of something and fail to express adequate gratitude in the first place.

Glenn Lieding



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## Bethlehem United Church of Christ

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Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office



### FEBRUARY 2019 EVENTS:

February 2 Luther College Nordic Choir performs at Bethlehem  
Tickets \$20 (\$15 students) available in church office  
www.luther.edu/music/nordic-choir/events  
February 7 & 21 Bethlehem Prayer Circle, 11:30-12:15  
February 14 Happy Valentines Day  
February 17 Fresh Produce collection for Food Gatherers  
March 2 Pretzels return to Bethlehem (tentative)



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Sunday Worship Times  
8:30 a.m. Chapel  
10:00 a.m. Sanctuary  
10:15 a.m. Sunday school  
Coffee Connection  
follows each service



## Surpassing expectations and promoting understanding – Malik’s story

by Susan Beckett

Google “Malik Hall Michigan” and the first results are for a basketball player. Keep looking and you’ll find an ambitious young man from the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti border who so impressed his Michigan State University (MSU) advisor for at-risk students, Betty Stafford, that she persistently insisted that we interview Malik “because his story belongs in Groundcover News.”

An engaging and personable young man with a ready smile and open demeanor, Malik Hall now lives in Seattle. He is a product manager for Microsoft cloud-based services, learning all he can about running a successful business, determined to one day be a CEO or own his own business.

“I’ve seen my family work in places they don’t like, and I’ve seen my family struggle because of the funds they didn’t have,” Hall said, explaining his ambitions.

He attributes his success to his drive and open mind, always eager to learn something new. But he is also quick to credit his mother – who did what she had to so that he could access good public schools and resources and still be part of the Ypsilanti community, and his grandmother – who engaged him with technology. The full-ride scholarship at MSU and their many funded enrichment programs played a large role, too.

Explaining his eagerness to learn, Hall

said, “Anytime I acted up (in my mom’s eyes), she would ask me why I did that. I couldn’t just respond with “I don’t know.” I had to respond with the actual reason. This methodology made me question everything around me and explore the greater reasons for why things happen. It also helps that I have always been an inquisitive person.”

Tekker, the phone- and computer- repair business Hall started in high school as part of the Business Professionals of America contest where he finished ninth in the state, was one of his early entrepreneurial ventures. Tekker developed further at MSU with the help of a couple of friends.

“My friends were eager to become more technically savvy. It was a way for them to learn more entrepreneurship,” Hall stated.

But Tekker might not exist without the early interest in technology propelled by Malik’s grandmother, who spent \$474 on materials and asked 13-year-old Malik to build her a computer from the components.

Success building the computer reinforced the conviction that he could accomplish anything he set his mind to. Traveling and learning about other

cultures became his next dream after he was nominated to be a People-to-People ambassador, if he could come up with the \$6,800 to pay his way for the trip to Switzerland, Spain, France and Italy. Although this was not a school project, he got permission to raise funds by selling candy at Huron High during his junior and senior years. He got to know everyone and his perseverance so impressed his fellow students and teachers that he was the subject of a commencement speech and the recipient of several awards, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Human Rights Award, even though the \$1,203.90 in profits was insufficient for that trip.



**Determined to improve on the life of his ancestors, Malik Hall seized every opportunity and may well become a high-tech CEO.**

“I think my personality played a huge role [in getting those honors and awards]. People saw

me as a genuine person who was always nice to others. Everyone in school knew me or knew of me. I wasn’t necessarily popular, but I treated everyone with the same respect and I aimed to be nice to everyone I met,” Hall said.

Hall did find ways to travel in college, using his profits for flights on a one-month trip to China where he concluded that, “We’re more similar than different, especially in big city life.” A funded spring break program took him to Oaxaca, Mexico, where he

helped restore rooms in a house used by children unable to attend school. He went to Israel for 12 days of perspective sharing as part of The David Program, all expenses paid.

As an Applied Engineering and Sciences major specializing in Supply Chain Operational Management, Hall received well-paying internships and was able to pay for flights for a study trip to Pachutla, Mexico, where he worked alongside neighborhood people repainting an office for people with disabilities. He added a computer science minor to his degree, which extended his studies to include a super-senior year. For the summer semester he went to Ann Arbor’s sister city, Hikone, for an intensive course on Japanese, his first exposure to the language.

Hall’s travelling prepared him for a college job as an Intercultural Aide and as a facilitator of multi-faceted discussions in the Multi-Cultural Racial Unity Experience, open table discussions on hot topics such as police brutality and politics. Malik’s volunteering extended to being treasurer of the Black Engineers and to mentoring younger children in STEM subjects, a role that continues as one of Microsoft’s Detroit contacts for potential interns.

Now that I’ve gotten to know Malik Hall, I realize what a compliment it was to us that Betty Stafford thought his story of surpassing expectations while building community and understanding belongs in Groundcover News.

## Helping marginalized populations by reducing terms of trespass orders

by Will Shakespeare  
Groundcover Vendor #258

On January 9, the City of Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission (AAHRC) examined various issues on the general topic of human rights, civil rights and civil liberties. Specifically, they discussed questions of racial profiling, harassment, trespassing, due process, discrimination, public accommodation and membership requirements for the new Independent Community Police Oversight Commission.

The AAHRC commissioners invited Ann Arbor Interim Police Chief Bob Pfannes and Senior Assistant City Attorney Arianne Slay for a formal presentation and discussion of trespassing, about which a complaint had reached the 15th Judicial District Court. During the questions and answers period, Commissioner

Linda Winkler wanted to know if one-year trespasses at the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) and the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) violate the city’s Public Accommodation Act. Pfannes and Slay were helpful in clarifying the issues and regulations.

Former longtime Commissioner Chair Dwight Wilson and most of the other Commissioners expressed their belief that a one-year trespass is punitive. Wilson stated that, in his opinion, a six-month trespass is more reasonable. City Council member Ali Ramlawi, also a member of the commission, suggested that AADL and AAATA should not trespass customers for more than six months but wanted private businesses to have the option of a one-year trespass. Commission Chair Leslie Stanburch guided the commission to further discuss related issues such as mental

health, Freedom of Information Act requests, gender, race, discrimination, police trespass statistics, diversity, reform and the appeal process.

The AAHRC meeting was a significant victory for the area’s marginalized

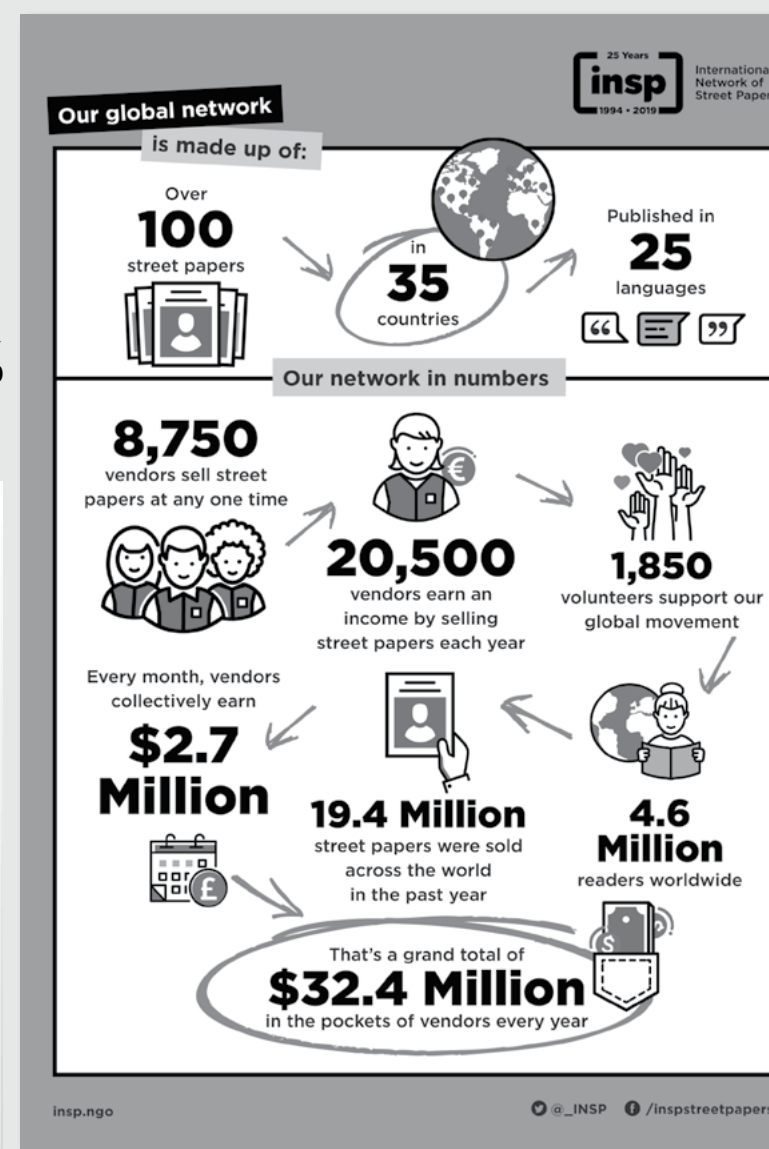
populations: Commissioners agreed to send a proposal to the City Council to pass an ordinance that will reduce the current one-year police trespass to a six-month trespass for public facilities such as AADL and the AAATA.

## International Street Paper Vendor Appreciation Week February 4-10

When you see your Groundcover News vendors during Vendor Appreciation Week, tell them how your life is improved by them doing their jobs. That vendor who always shows up by the Co-op on Wednesdays, the YMCA on Friday mornings, Espresso Royale on Thursday mornings, the Michigan Theater on Tuesday evenings, your place of worship – regardless of the weather – let them know you admire their dependability and strong work ethic.

You are the center and measure of their success. They always appreciate the gifts and tips so many of you generously bestow on them; they also want your respect.

**Right: The International Network of Street Newspapers, of which Groundcover News is a member, collectively supports over 20,000 vendors each year.**



## Washtenaw County Senior Café Program

The Senior Café program gives seniors the opportunity to receive nutritious meals and meet other seniors in the community if they choose to do so.

Meals are typically held in locations such as senior centers or churches throughout Washtenaw County. The frequency of these meals varies depending on the location.

For more information on the Senior Café program or the Meals on Wheel program, please visit: [www.washtenaw.org/snp](http://www.washtenaw.org/snp)



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## The HCV Eviction Prevention Program: keeping people in their homes

by Payton Watt

Groundcover Contributor

In a city as affluent as Ann Arbor, it can be easy to forget that individuals and families in the community are undergoing evictions. However, these evictions do occur, and they create an enormous amount of stress, both for those at risk and for those who have already lost their homes. Eviction is such a serious issue that we are required to ask: Who is combating this issue and what is being done about it?

The Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) and SOS Community Services both play a large role in aiding individuals with housing instability. The AAHC seeks to provide affordable housing in the area, both on a temporary and long-term basis. They manage city-owned housing complexes and administer countywide housing vouchers issued by the state. They also aim to create healthy and safe communities for all, which they do by establishing meaningful partnerships with other nonprofits.

SOS is an Ypsilanti-based nonprofit that focuses on individual and family homelessness and poverty alleviation. Along with food banks, emergency services and child-development programs, they assist those in need with finding suitable housing, building self-sufficiency and creating an action plan for clients' future.

On July 1, 2016, the AAHC partnered with SOS to create the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Eviction Prevention Program. This program aims to decrease the number of individuals who lose their HCV – otherwise known as Section 8 – which can cover up to two-thirds of their rent. It is extremely important to diminish the number of terminations, because once a voucher is terminated, that individual or family is banned for life from receiving another one.

SOS and the AAHC saw the need for this program after recognizing that there were 100 voucher terminations from July 2014 to June 2015. Terminations can occur for various reasons, including not completing annual paperwork on time, “leasing up” (not finding affordable housing within the given time period), not reporting income, not paying rent, or having unreported guests in the home. Disputes and ten-



AAHC's HCV Eviction Prevention Program helps voucher recipients with paperwork, landlord relations and monetary crises to prevent losing their vouchers forever.

sion between tenants and the landlord can also increase the risk of eviction.

Vouchers are originally dispensed by the AAHC, and all individuals who have issues with the voucher (including risk of termination) are then referred to SOS. The SOS housing support coordinator works with each individual or family to determine next steps. The coordinator seeks to prevent eviction and termination of vouchers at all costs, since homelessness could result. Referrals are usually resolved in 50 days. In addition, if a voucher has already been terminated, the coordinator can assist with appealing the decision up to one year after the termination occurred.

The program has had immense success since it began in 2016. From July 2017 to June 2018, there were about 65 terminations, down from 100 a few years before. In the current fiscal year (beginning July 2018), SOS has received 91 referrals from AAHC, all of which succeeded in avoiding termination – a 100 percent success rate so far.

The process and success of the program can be better explained through a personal story shared by SOS:

*A referral was received from AAHC to assist a family that was being evicted due to a lease violation. The family, a single mother with one child, was struggling to find another place to live as she had a previous eviction and owed money to that landlord. The family is on a fixed income with the mother receiving SSI income in the amount of \$750 per*

*amounts vary depending on family size, personal situation, income and location).*

*Once housing was identified, the coordinator worked with the family to secure the funds for the security deposit. The coordinator helped the family obtain state Emergency Relief and move-in help from Housing Access of Washtenaw County and St. Vincent DePaul. The family the security deposit and moved into their new home days before she was scheduled to be evicted.*

Other services provided by the housing support coordinator, such as assistance with filing paperwork, prevent such dramatic emergencies. Referrals to the program of those voucher-holders who appear at-risk are made by the AAHC.

The HCV Eviction Prevention Program received startup funding from Religious Action for Affordable Housing and is now funded by Coordinated Funding of Washtenaw County and AAHC. It has been funded as a pilot program but hopefully will continue to be funded and increased in light of the positive results it has brought. If sufficient funding were available, the program would expand to cover all at-risk HCV renters in Washtenaw County.

The program is having a profound impact on the lives of those at risk of eviction, as well as those who thought they had already lost everything with nowhere to turn. To learn more about the HCV Eviction Prevention Program, visit SOS at [soscs.org](http://soscs.org), or RAAH at [www.raah.org/projects](http://www.raah.org/projects).



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## Celebrating Black History Month: origin and developments



by Will Shakespeare

*A people without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots.*

– Marcus Garvey

Carter G. Woodson followed in the footsteps of W.E.B. DuBois and became the second black person to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard. In 1915, dismayed about the paucity of interest in black history and black culture, Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) – now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). There was very little discussion about the black experience in America's history books. In 1916, Woodson founded the prestigious Journal of Negro History.

He rallied his colleagues at ASNLH to establish “Negro History Week” in 1925. The celebration started in 1926. The second week of February was selected in honor of Lincoln's birthday (February 12) and Frederick Douglass's birthday (February 14). In 1976, on its 50-year anniversary, the celebration was changed to Black History Month.

Black History Month – also known as African-American History Month – has been celebrated every February in the United States since the 1970s (and in Canada since 1995), and each October in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland. Black History Month was not celebrated in the UK until 1987, then primarily in London. Today, the UK's celebration is observed across cities and towns. The Irish celebration began informally in an abolitionist city that welcomed Frederick Douglass in the 19th century. The informal celebrations began in 2010 and became officially recognized in 2014.

Most nations share the same basic aim as the United States and Canada regarding Black History Month: to celebrate the history of black people. Additionally, distinguished African American historians such as John Hope Franklin of Duke University wanted the people of the world to know that “Black History Month has the aims of celebrating the achievements and contributions of black peoples throughout the world and to

educate the peoples of all nations about black history.”

Themes are very important during Black History Month. Themes focus public attention on the issues that have plagued African Americans in the past as well those issues that continue in the present day. As Woodson noted, “The intention has never been to dictate or limit the exploration of the black experience, but [instead] to bring to the public's attention important developments that merit emphasis.”

Since 1928, ASALH has proposed annual themes for the celebration. That year's theme for Black History Week was “Civilization: A World Achievement.” Each decade since then has organized annual themes around related subjects particularly relevant to the times. The 1930s focused on significant African-American achievements. The 1940s highlighted issues of peace, democracy and labor. Themes in the 1950s sought to raise awareness about black history. The Black Awakening of the 1960s led to greater focus on civil rights and African-American contributions to history and culture. By the 1970s, according to [blackhistorymonth.gov](http://blackhistorymonth.gov), “the entire nation had come to recognize the importance of black history in the drama of the American story.”

In 1976, the nation's bicentennial, the celebration was expanded to a month. President Gerald Ford urged Americans to “Seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” Since 1976, each American president has issued what is known as the “African American History Month Proclamation.” The 1980s delved deeper into African American history, survival, the family, religion, the American Constitution and the Afro-American international connection.

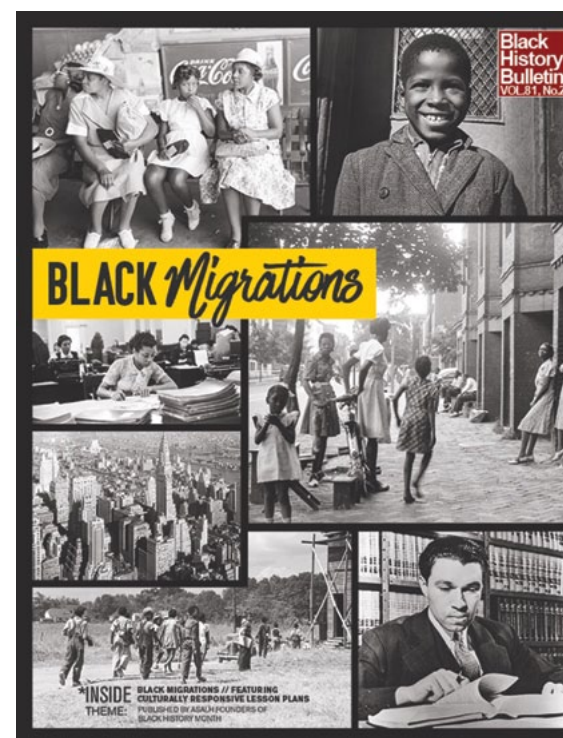
Subsequent annual themes, focusing on black scholarship, women, and empowerment, have included:

- Afro-American Scholars: Leaders, Activists and Writers (1993)
- Empowering black Americans (1994)
- Black Women (1996)
- African Americans and Civil Rights: a Reprisal (1997)
- Legacy of African American Leadership for the Present and the Future (1999)
- Celebrating Community: A Tribute to Black Fraternal, Social, and Civil Institutions (2006)

- The Crisis in Black Education (2017)
- African Americans in Times of War (2018)

In 2018, author Zora Neale Hurston's posthumous book, “Barracoon: The Story of The Last Cargo,” sparked a renewed interest in forced black Migration from Africa to America and elsewhere, inspiring this year's Black History Month theme, “Black Migration.” The theme for 2020 is “African Americans and the Vote,” and the theme for 2021 is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.”

Hurston's book is based on her interview with a man called Cudjoe Kazoola Lewis, the last survivor of the original group of slaves that were in the famous transatlantic ship called Clotilda – the last known vessel to bring enslaved people to the United States. In 1860, Lewis was brought from the kingdom of Dahomey to the entry port of Mobile, Ala. The 32 slaves aboard the Clotilda built “Africatown” just three miles north of Mobile.



“Black Migration,” this year's Black History Month theme, was inspired by Zora Neale Hurston's book “Barracoon: the Story of the Last Cargo.”

Black History Month has enriched the lives, culture and understanding of many people. Celebrating and learning about diverse cultures promotes the underpinnings of peaceful coexistence so needed in the world.

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United Way of Washtenaw County



My reaction to recreational marijuana legalization in Michigan

by Anonymous

As I was waiting for my car service to be done on Dec. 6, I read about legalized marijuana in the newspaper. What do you guys think of recreational marijuana being legalized in Michigan?

Personally, I don't support the habit, but I have been on the other side of the spectrum. I was once a supporter. I have been a user and abuser of the drug, and it did me no good. I became forgetful, lazy and impatient for my next high, even though it is supposedly not addictive. I became irresponsible in paying important bills in order to be able to buy more weed, and eventually I became homeless.

I relocated to Michigan in August 2014, when medical marijuana was already legal so long as you had a medical card certifying the need for it. I thought about finding excuses or making up ailments I didn't really have in order to qualify for this medical card. However, I never went through the application process. I decided, for some miraculous reason, that it was time for me to get clean from drugs instead. And I did so

a little while later (after a few relapses since my first few attempts to get clean).

As I have gotten away from it over the last three years, I can't help but to get shocked at how many others choose not to get away from it at all. They want to use it every day and they actually do. So I think, how did we get to this point?

Well, it all seems to have started in 1971, when John Lennon and Yoko Ono sang "John Sinclair" in a concert at the Crisler Center in Ann Arbor. This concert was done with the purpose of supporting the song's namesake, who was sentenced to almost 10 years in prison for possessing two joints. A few days later, the Michigan Supreme Court overturned the convictions and let Sinclair out of prison.

Exactly a year later, in 1972, the first Hash Bash was held, fueling the sentiment that had led to the concert a year before. Hash Bash is a "celebration" where activists, along with smoking marijuana from pipes, joints and even giant bongos, advocate to make marijuana legal. And so it happened. At the end of 2018, a ballot measure to replace marijuana prohibition with a legal and

regulated system of cannabis cultivation and sales was approved by a margin of 56 percent to 44 percent.

What has always puzzled me is why the police did not arrest these people at Hash Bash gatherings for public intoxication. It seems to me that the whole objective of these gatherings was that of a big rebellion, breaking the law and inundating the streets with clouds of smoke that stank like pot.

Under Michigan's new law, anyone over the age of 21 is allowed to cultivate up to a total of 12 marijuana plants at home, possess 2.5 ounces at any time, and store up to 10 ounces in their residence. The legal limit allowing anyone to carry 2.5 ounces equates to someone carrying approximately 250 joints.

This sounds a bit excessive to me. Who needs that much weed, unless they want to sell it, which is illegal?

Now I can see that every time I pointed out the benefits pot had for me, they were nothing but excuses for me to get high and be less productive in life. How could I be so self-deluded? I can accept today with certainty that that was a big reason why I have not fulfilled some of

my life goals yet. It is the very reason why I do not have major achievements to be proud of. Now I can see so clearly that I wasted all those years doing nothing but smoking, failing in college and becoming miserable. But again, I know my story might not be like yours.

I am aware that most people do approve of the habit, especially for medical use for conditions such as Parkinson's, epilepsy, cancer, spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, HIV/AIDS, arthritis and insomnia. As a matter of fact, I may agree with pot being used for some of these medical purposes. I am a big supporter of anything that helps improve people's quality of life. For people with these conditions, pot may improve their quality of life, but not for me.

For me, one joint was always one too many, but a thousand were never enough. It nearly destroyed me, and so I am lucky to be able to tell my story. Today, I am no longer willing to pay the price I had to pay to rebuild my life. For me, the darkness came to an end in the absence of pot, and I am happy with the way I rebuilt my life after I put the dope down.

My upcoming book: "Rising out of depression and going up the Royal Road"



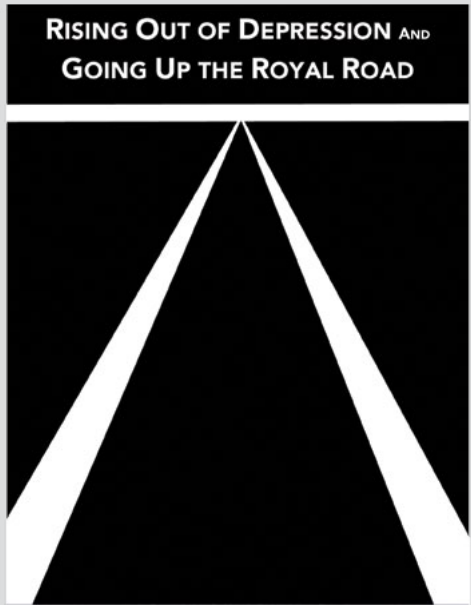
by Kevin Spangler  
Groundcover  
Vendor #307

I set a goal to write 111 books and two days later a publisher from Loving Healing Press called me out of the blue and said he wanted to publish my life story and philosophy. It is set up to be a self-help book for finding out where you are going wrong and to reprogram your brain for a better reality.

*Editor's Note: The remainder of this article are snatches of text from the first chapter of the book, which Kevin is co-creating with his girlfriend, Ariel.*

Spaghetti Junction

*Life is unmanageable, you are missing your turns, it makes sense to you at the time, you rationalize irrational things, you never move forward, you keep going in circles, you are making wrong*



*turns, you get frustrated, you keep making mistakes, you don't know why you're making mistakes because you are still working from old programs or beliefs in your brain, you can't see clearly, you can't see ahead, your frustration clouds the present and makes life negative, you abandon any hope or dreams for the future that you have developed because of negativity.*

When I was 16, I got a root canal. I never did drugs or smoked cigarettes and I always thought that all those things were disgusting, and I never wanted to do them. But I went to the dentist office and when I was there, they gave me laughing gas – nitrous oxide. It was the most amazing experience and I felt everything turn purple and everything was vibrating and the lights were shaking. This is where I made my first wrong turn in the Spaghetti Junction. That led to me to start experimenting with whippets, which are metal gas cartridges that I would use to release nitrous oxide into a big balloon and then inhale from the balloon. I started spending all my money on nitrous oxide. I was paying people to take me into Ann Arbor, the only place close-by that I could get the whippet chargers.

Growing up, I was on medication for ADD. I used to play all sports in school. Something happened where my dad would not let me

play sports anymore, and then he told me that he was not going to let me be in marching band anymore, either. That was the last thing he could take away from me, so we got into an argument when he was taking me home from work and then he started beating me. I cannot remember what happened after that, but I fell out of the car. It was on a Sunday, three days before Thanksgiving, and I did not go to school that week.

I started eating everything I possibly could. I started adding extra mayonnaise to every sandwich, I added butter to everything. I would indent

see ROYAL ROAD, page 10

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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

GROUNDCOVER  
VENDOR CODE

While Groundcover News is a non-profit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$2, or the face value of the paper.

- I agree not to ask for more than

face value or solicit donations by any other means.

- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.

- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.

- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.

- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff or other vendors verbally or physically.

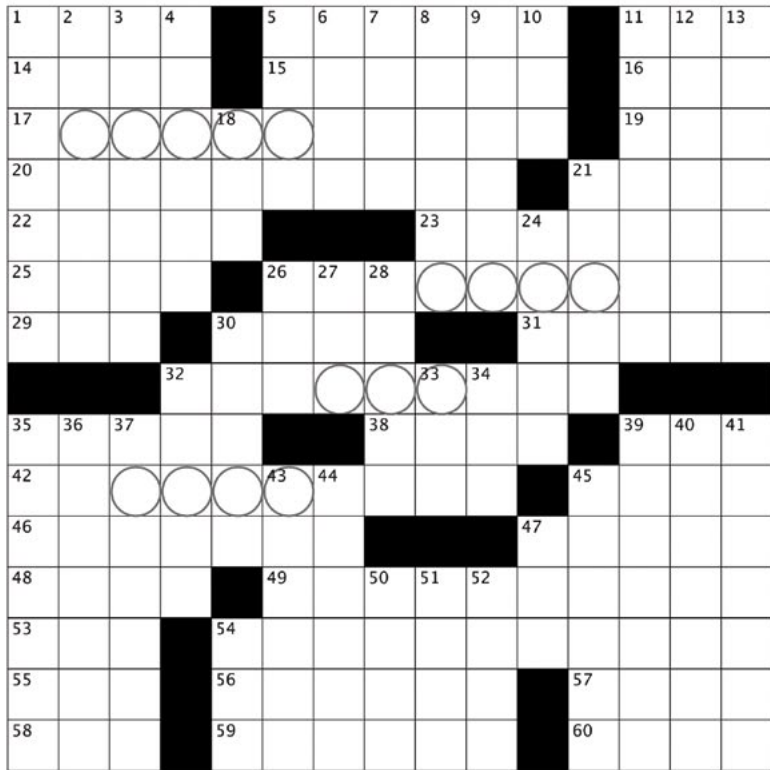
Musical Elements Peter A. Collins

ACROSS

- Cowboys' Texas home, briefly
- Syria's largest city
- Director Reiner
- Gillette brand
- Wausau and Warsaw
- Ab \_\_\_\_
- Cardiologist's concern
- Pommes frites seasoning
- Engage in hand-to-hand combat?
- Unpainted
- She liked Ike?
- M\*A\*S\*H corporal
- "Pictures \_\_\_\_ Exhibition"
- Member of a Montana tribe
- To be, in Barcelona
- Mitchell of music
- Oceanic expanses
- Eating regimen
- Town official, once
- Event attendee
- "\_\_\_\_ making a list..."
- LP
- Speak (up)
- Candle lighter
- "Lights" singer Goulding
- Rover locale
- Bart Simpson shenanigans
- N.O.W. part: Abbr.
- 1975 #1 hit by the group whose name is found in this grid's circles
- Altered speech?
- Fix footwear, in a way
- Speck
- One on a bender
- Danish seaport
- Mirrored

DOWN

- Nassau home
- Repeat
- Editor's concern
- "The Descent of Man" author
- Ibuprofen target



Peter A. Collins

- Whoppers
- Louisiane, for one
- Certain fight weapon
- Czar known as "the Great"
- \_\_\_\_ Kosh B'Gosh
- 1937 Cole Porter musical
- Share an area
- Noted Tudor family
- Three, in Tuscany
- Fancy bathroom fixture
- Title character in a sci-fi classic
- Unimportant piece
- Stranded messenger
- "Dead Man's Party" group \_\_\_\_ Boingo
- Rice once found on a football field?
- Hides
- La Palme \_\_\_\_
- War zone hazard: Abbr.
- Car-washing cloth
- Lucy's sitcom surname
- Belated-birthday card givers phrase
- Place for a toboggan to begin
- Make less hairy
- Gets steamed
- Scratched glass
- Bright red
- TV type
- Beats readout, for short
- Bard's "soon"
- E Street Band member Lofgren
- One bent on proposing?
- B'way sign

- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.

- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.

- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.

- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.

- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to: [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com), 734-263-2098.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES PACKAGE PRICING

Size	Black and White	Color	Approx. Size (W x H)
Business card	\$49.95	\$65.95	3.5 x 2
1/8	\$89.95	\$129.95	5 x 3 or 2.5 x 6.5
1/6	\$129.95	\$165.95	5 x 4
1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 x 6.25
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	10.25 x 6.5 or 5 x 13
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10.25 x 13

Three Months/Three Issues: 15% off  
Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off  
Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off  
Additional 20% off ads with coupons



## Irish for a day



by Elizabeth “Lit” Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

Anywhere in history on any part of the globe where women get a day off deserves notice. I found that day quite unexpectedly last month while selling my Groundcovers at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.

I was told there was a party taking place in the Parish Activity Center and was invited to be seated alongside other women at one of the various tables, each adorned with a unique centerpiece whose history and purpose I would find out later.

The inspiration behind the gathering was the Rev. James Conlon, who represented one of only a smattering of men. He revealed that this day, which is celebrated the Sunday after Christmas, originated in his birthplace of Ireland. There it is called “Nollaig na mBan,” Little Christmas or Women’s Christmas, and occurs January 6 each year. It is a day set aside for women to be free

from their duties. On that day, the men change diapers, do laundry and cooking and generally fulfill the traditional roles of their wives.

Although like most present that day I am not Irish, we all bonded over the shared gratification of women having a day to relax from their routine, even if it is “just one day” as one woman in the crowd stated aloud to the humorous understanding of all the women in attendance.

We were treated to nice fare, including wine and crudité. I reveled in the songs played by a mostly female Irish band consisting of a mother, daughter, son-in-law and the former college friend of the daughter. There was a fiddler who lent just the right touch of Gaelic tradition.

This Irish celebration would not have been complete without hearing “Old Danny Boy,” which the group related they had first performed in Ireland. After listening to their distinctive and moving rendition, it was clear to me why the Irish performance we were treated to was originally given glowing praise.

## Going up the Royal Road

continued from page 8

the top of my burger and fill the indent with butter. I wanted to kill myself by eating. I was completely off the road and into the gravel.

\* \* \*

[In the military], I started going to school for advanced electronic computers and was retaining nothing because my brain was so fried. The only way I could pass the test was to take the test, memorize the answers and retake it again. I would always fail, so I started to have to take extra classes because I was stupid. I went through the classes and was still winning best-dressed with the shiniest shoes. Primped and pampered, I finally triple-failed the test so I could get out of the school and be a chef in the military, which was my original plan.

After I triple-failed, I had nothing to do in the military because I was in limbo between work. Sometimes when we are traveling the Spaghetti Junction we will actually try to make wrong

turns; we rationalize irrational things because it makes sense at the time. Our lives can become so tangled we do not even know how to remove ourselves from the labyrinth our life has become because of our bad choices or wrong turns.

So I became friends with all the derelicts in the military. I started to do and sell ecstasy heavily. I took a \$6,000 loan out of Navy Credit Federal Union and I told everyone else to get out a loan. I was having ecstasy hotel parties off-base and selling to the people coming to the party. I ended up getting raided. I had 30 pills of ecstasy in my underwear pocket, and I took it out to sell to the undercover narc who was my friend.

I went to prison to be court-marshalled and that’s when I started praying. My lawyer kept telling me I needed to rat on people in the case. I told him I wasn’t going to. So, I chanted and prayed that I didn’t deserve five years in prison, and that I only deserved



Celtic-American folk band, Roane, performed for “Women’s Christmas” on Jan. 6 at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Ann Arbor.

Before long, I was caught up as a participant in the event. By then I had learned that the circular cakes at the center of each table all contained a replica of the little baby Jesus. Like the other women at my table, I held my breath, hoping my slice of cake would be the one containing the precious babe.

Before they got to my section, someone in my group announced that they had found it in their slice. Similar exclamations of delight dotted the room. Although I didn’t get the prize, there was no doubt that I had won also, just being included in such a special day.

I shared with the women at my table my homeless struggle and the unique perspective it has given me on the world around me. The women eagerly agreed as I related the importance of the voice of the homeless women not be drowned out in the discourse of the women’s movement.

By the sheer chance of my selling Groundcover News, this first Sunday of the year filled me with hope that women from all backgrounds will bond to create a better future for our daughters. I enjoyed the fellowship of women who, like me, need time – albeit it “just one day” – to feel more empowered to face our world.

a year in prison, so I prayed for a one-year sentence. They gave me a one-year sentence. I ended up getting to be a chef after all – in prison.

**Experiential exercise: life reflection**  
(Excerpt from “Action Book for Co-Creating the Experience of the Road Trip,” a companion journal to the book)

1. What is one of the hardest things you have ever been through on your “Spaghetti Junction”?

2. What type of decisions have you made in your life that seemed reasonable at the time, but later seemed ridiculous?

3. How has negativity or fear ruled your behavior in the past?

(Wow, that was a rough ride. Let’s reset with 33 deep breaths.)

### Volunteer for GROUNDCOVER

writing, proofreading, social media, work in our office, baking for birthdays, and more!

Contact us: [contact@groundcovernews.com](mailto:contact@groundcovernews.com)  
734-263-2098

or attend our next Volunteer Meeting:  
Wednesday, March 13 at 7pm  
423 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor, MI  
Opposite the elevator on the basement level

## 10 for \$10 Exploring Washtenaw County on the cheap

by Elizabeth Bauman  
Groundcover Contributor

Looking for something to do that won’t break the bank? Hoping to try something new? Wanting a little something sweet or savory? **10 for \$10** hopes to introduce or reintroduce you to low cost or free things to do in Washtenaw County and surrounding communities.

**1. Go and see one of the movies up for an Oscar!** The Emagine Theater in Saline has bargains during the day and comfortable reclining chairs.

**2. Step into Argus Farm Stop Liberty for yoga** with Chelsea Hohn every Sunday in the greenhouse from 7-8 a.m. Just bring your own mat. All levels are welcome. \$5 suggested donation.

**3. Learn the sport of curling** in Chelsea, Friday, February 8. Join the fun – this is your chance to learn the sport and then participate in a tournament on Saturday. Organized by the Chelsea Area Chamber of Commerce; visit their website for more information.

**4. Get your Valentine some delicious French macarons** at **la bon macaron** at 209 S. Fourth Avenue in Ann Arbor. Flavors include salted caramel, pistachio and chocolate filled with chocolate buttercream. Beautiful as well as tasty.

**5. Learn all about spiders on February 19 at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens.** A professor of biology from EMU will discuss her research on spiders. The program includes an opportunity to observe some specimens. Presented by Sierra Club of Huron Valley. Free.

**6. Storytime at the University of Michigan Art Museum** promotes art appreciation for all ages. A story in the gallery is followed by a fun, hands-on activity for young children. Saturday February 25 at 11:15 a.m. The museum is always free, so take time to stroll the exhibits.

**7. Get a hot fudge or caramel milkshake** at Pizza Bob’s on State Street in Ann Arbor.

**8. Meet up with a friend you haven’t seen in a while** and take them out for a coffee at a place you have not visited before. The choices are limitless!

**9. Take a leisurely walk in your neighborhood.** Take advantage of the longer days – before long there will be early signs of spring.

**10. Attend a free concert at the U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance.** See adjacent article in this issue for details.

Want to contribute to 10 for \$10? Please send ideas for inexpensive treasures and experiences in and around our vibrant community to: [submissions@groundcovernews.com](mailto:submissions@groundcovernews.com)

## Free concerts bring the fine arts to all

by Selena Grover  
U-M Student Contributor

The U-M School of Music, Theatre, and Dance (SMTD) holds free concerts open to the public every month. The variety and quality of these programs is astonishing, ranging from solo vocal and instrumental recitals, to early music period-instrument and jazz ensemble performances, to

symphony orchestra concerts and full-scale opera productions. There is always available seating with no required reservations. The school does not discriminate based on race, gender or income, so all are welcome to attend.

See **below** for a list of some free concerts in February. Visit the U-M SMTD website, [smt.d.umich.edu](http://smt.d.umich.edu), for a complete calendar of events.

### U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance Select Public Performances

**Lunar New Year Carillon Concert: Year of the Pig**

Tuesday, February 5, 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.  
Burton Memorial Tower (Bell Tower), 230 N Ingalls St, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

**Symphony Band**

Friday, February 8, 8:00 p.m.  
Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

**Concert Band**

Monday, February 11, 8:00 p.m.  
Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

**University Philharmonic Orchestra**

Wednesday, February 20, 8:00 p.m.  
Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

**University Symphony Orchestra and University Choirs**

Tuesday, February 26, 8:00 p.m.  
Hill Auditorium, 825 N University Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48109



## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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29	S	E	R		J	O	N	I		D	E	E	P	S	
35	C	R	I	E	R				G	O	E	R		H	E
42	H	I	F	I	R	E			C	O	R	D		P	I
46	A	C	O	L	Y	T	E							E	L
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58	S	O	T						O	D	E	N	S	E	



## Wheatberry Waldorf salad

by Elizabeth Bauman

Groundcover Contributor

### Ingredients

2½ cups water  
1 cup wheatberries, rinsed  
1/3 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup snipped fresh parsley  
1/4 cup cider vinegar  
1/4 cup apple juice or apple cider

1 tablespoon sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 scant teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 large Granny Smith apple unpeeled, cored and chopped  
1 large firm, sweet apple of your choice, unpeeled, cored and chopped  
1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
1/2 cup dried cranberries or cherries  
3/4 cup seedless grapes, halved  
1/2 cup honey roasted peanuts

### Directions

In a small saucepan combine the water and wheatberries. Cover and chill in refrigerator overnight. Do not drain. Bring water and wheat berries to boiling and then reduce to a simmer for 30-35 minutes. Wheatberries should be tender with a chewy texture. Drain and allow to cool for a few minutes.

In a screw-top jar combine oil, parsley, vinegar, apple juice, sugar, salt and

cinnamon. Drizzle dressing over wheatberries and stir.

In a large bowl combine fruits and vegetables. Stir in wheatberry mixture, mix well. Top with nuts. Cover and chill in refrigerator.

*This stores well in the refrigerator all week for a quick, healthy, make-ahead lunch.*

Serves 4.

## Give where You Live

Between service projects and The Kiwanis Thrift Sale, the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor's members and volunteers have provided over \$6,150,000 in donations, goods and services to individuals and families since 1921. We couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you for your on-going support!

For more information call 734-665-0450 or visit [a2kiwanis.org](http://a2kiwanis.org).

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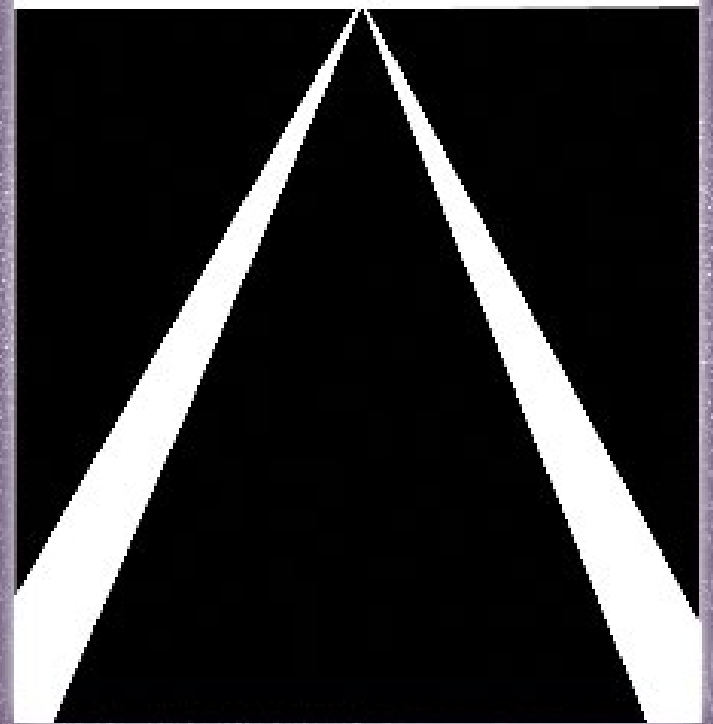
Kiwanis Thrift Sale  
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[a2kiwanis.org](http://a2kiwanis.org)  
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## RIISING OUT OF DEPRESSION AND GOING UP THE ROYAL ROAD

### Upcoming book

by Kevin Spangler and Ariel Magidson



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